

Ferris Mansion,
Bronx, New York City.

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District No. 4
Southern New York State

Historic American Buildings Survey
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer
25 West 45th Street, New York City

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THE FERRIS MANSION
Ferris Avenue near East 177th Street
Borough of Bronx, Bronx County, New York, N. Y.

Owner:

Albert L. Lowenstein
370 Riverside Drive
New York, N. Y.

Date of Erection:

1687

Architect:

Unknown

Builder:

Unknown

Present Condition:

Very dilapidated

Number of Stories:

Two stories, attic and cellar. One and one-half story wing.

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - Stone

Floors - Wood

Interior walls - Plaster

Exterior walls - Stucco on stone and shingles

Roof - Wood shingle

Other Existing Records:

Additional Data:Location, Date and History:

This picturesque stone and shingle dwelling of pre-Revolutionary times is located on Throgg's Neck, Bronx, near where Weetcheater Creek empties into the East River. It is reputed to be the oldest house in the Bronx, having been built in 1687 by Josiah Hunt, son of Thomas Hunt, the patenteer of Hunt's Point.

It is said (in the Historical Guide to the City of New York, by Kelly, p. 205, par. 93) that "the Ferrie Mansion in the Westchester Country Club Grounds was used as Howe's Headquarters after the British landing at Throgg's Neck in October, 1776. Marks on the stairs are said to have been made by one of their officer's horses. The house was saved from destruction by the British Fleet thru the heroism of the mistress who calmly walked up and down the veranda."

The house has been variously used since, probably in most cases as a farm house, and is so occupied now by tenants of the present owner, Mr. Albert L. Lowenstein.

Architectural Description:

The house points to the south on land falling away to the waters of Westchester Creek on the west side, and fairly level elsewhere. It is L shaped and the main building 24 by 53 feet is two full stories in height and has another story in the steeply pitched roof. The construction of this mass is largely stone with a two story wooden lean-to in the angle formed by the northern wing.

This wing is of stone, one story high, with other rooms and may have been the oldest part of the house. The low ceilings, small windows, winding

stairs and large old-fashioned fireplace now bricked up might be thought to indicate this. However, the end room of this wing was evidently added later as evinced by the shingled gable wall with a window sash in it, which partitions this room from the rest of the house, upstairs.

The masonry walls of the earlier part of this wing were seemingly laid in clay and have been stuccoed in at least two periods. The under coat has a strong lime content as in the older Colonial work.

The exterior design is most unusual for Colonial work and must have been altered at various times. It seems probable that all of the dormers and side gables were additions, together with the present porch.

A peculiar and unaccountable feature is the projection of the west gable. There is a double step in the attic floor at this point, which is probably cantilevered floor beams above the main beams and a massive end plate, all to support the gable which projects some ten inches from the wall below. There is no visible reason for this construction whatever.

The interior has apparently been altered by the substitution of marble mantels for small coal grates, in place of what must once have been wood burning fireplaces, and a molded plaster cornice has been added in the west parlor.

Sash, doors, and hardware have been looted and replaced until hardly enough remain to indicate the original details of the house.

Stanton Habersham, (Author)

June 29, 1934.

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